

SOCIAL ACTION

**THE CHRISTIAN FAITH
AND WORLD UPHEAVAL**

Christian Community

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CONTENTS

The Christian Faith and World Upheaval	1
Guiding Religious Convictions	1
The Meaning of World Upheavals	10
I. Toward a World Community of Persons	13
II. The Revolt Against Colonialism	23
III. Revolt Against Racial Discrimination	27
IV. Welfare for All	30
Decision-Making by Christians	39
Our Responsibility for World Unrest	41
Discussion Guides	46
Good Reading	47

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The Christian Faith and World Upheaval

The writers of this series are seeking to indicate the meaning of the following statement for five areas of contemporary life: *The whole of this actual world is to be taken seriously as a community of persons in which the living God acts and to which we freely respond.* With our minds directed particularly to the international situation, let us briefly analyze this statement.

GUIDING RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS

The whole of this actual world is to be taken seriously. Since in God we live and move and have our being, there is literally nothing in human affairs that is non-religious, in the sense that it has no connection with man's relation to God or with God's activity in the world. Among the many truths of life which we affirm in theory and deny in practice, this one stands near the top of the list. With stubborn persistence we draw the lines: on this side the "religious," on the other, the "secular"; on this side "God's work," on the other, "human activity"; on this side the "divine institution," on the other, "human institutions"; here the "sacred vocations," there the "secular vocations." We do not exactly deny that God is concerned with all of life's manifestations but we come close to it.

Why do we persist in making these distinctions? One explanation lies in the fact that, being human beings and not gods, we cannot think about everything at once. In order to think and act at all we are compelled to segregate a portion of life and give our attention to that. The limited human mind must divide life into compartments. Else, beginning everywhere, we should end nowhere. In the mind of God, so we surmise, all of life is always present. He sees the world whole. Past, present, and future are also before Him. For human beings this is impossible. Hence the compartmentalizing and dividing. For the

main compartments we have labels: Religion, Science, Politics, Education, Art, Government, Business, Family, the Personal, the Social, and so on.

Because our body-confined lives must have "a local habitation and a name," and because we are, even with modern communications, limited with respect to space, we also make much of geographical divisions. Where we are inevitably feels like the center of the earth, physically and spiritually.

We also divide life on the basis of quality. To one condition we give the name, "Order." And orderliness, we are inclined to think, is always desirable. "Disorder," on the other hand, is always deplorable. "Harmony" seems so good that we are sure it is of God. "Strife" and "contention" are bad, devil-inspired. Voluntary moral action and quiet persuasion are good and with them God is well pleased. Force and coercion are evil, not something God can be mixed up in. "Loyalty to principle" no matter what happens is noble; yielding, concession, compromise are reprehensible and incur the displeasure of God.

How We Segregate God from Life

All this dividing and segregating is inevitable. But, inevitably, it leads us into error. The principal error is our assumption that these divisions are *finally real*. We segregate God Himself, assigning to places, people, and situations the measure of His presence and concern which accords with our finite understand-

This issue in the current series on "Christian Community" has been written chiefly by Herman Reissig, international relations secretary of the Council for Social Action. The analysis of world upheaval from the perspective of the Christian faith has been preceded in this series by a general theological statement, and by interpretations of American politics, economics and public opinion in relation to Christianity. The sixth and final issue of the series will be on the nature of the church.

Other participants in the planning and writing of the series are Edwin Becker, Julian Hartt, William Miller, William Muehl, James Laney, Ernest Lefever, Robert Lynn and Kenneth Underwood.

ing. We set up spiritual priorities and are greatly tempted to assume that the Almighty is also guided by them. Thus, God, of course, listens when we pray. But does God take note when we cast our vote in a political election or attend a United Nations meeting? A clergyman goes about God's business. Whose business a banker or politician or farmer goes about we are not so sure. The church is a divine institution and God is surely interested in having churches. Government? Is that divine, in the sense that God works through it, can use it as one of His instruments for saving men? That has not seemed so clear.

Our division of the world on national, racial, and geographical lines is also, unconsciously, transferred to the mind of God. He was, of a surety, with the fathers of *our* country. It is a little harder for us to believe that He was also present in the history of Ethiopia, Russia, Germany, China. He has a "purpose for the United States of America." Only the unbeliever could doubt it. Can no purpose be discerned in the development of the British Empire and Commonwealth or in the destiny of Japan?

As for our quality labels, the moral sense of man must make distinctions; some conditions and actions are preferable to others. But, often, our distinctions and labels are much too neat. We make our little pictures of what is good and what is bad, and invariably and sometimes dogmatically draw the picture out of our quite limited personal or class or American experience. So, for example, we can without much trouble see God at a conference table where differences are settled with quiet words. But a social revolution? God could not be in all that clash and clamor and suffering! Which means that we end by displacing God from whole areas of human life.

The Biblical Picture of God's Action

Had we read our Bibles with more care we should have avoided some of this error. The God of the Bible is a God who sustains all life, gathers to His heart all His human children and is present in all their activities. He sends one prophet to bless little children and another to counsel with the head of

government. He is in one human event as Mercy and in another as Wrath. He sends His son to read the Scriptures in the synagogue—and to talk with a prostitute in the less desirable part of the town ("Irreligious," they said). Incarnate in Christ, God employs anger against the Pharisees and coercion against the money-changers—and, in a flood of tenderness, bids the weary and heavy-laden to find rest in Him.

Where are we left? Not, it appears, with a blueprint of God's action. We are left with a God who is in our actual world, who goes where His people go and works in more ways than we have dreamed for their salvation. When one begins to understand that God takes seriously the whole of our actual world and that, therefore, Christians must take all of it seriously, we may then see that we have been unable to find God in the tumult of our time, partly because we insisted on looking for Him where our foolish little blueprints said He ought to be.

A Community of Persons

The world as a community of persons. The Gospel is addressed to persons. Only persons can respond to God. Christianity is, in truth, a personal religion. But what is a person? How do persons become persons? How do you go about helping, or saving, a person? We are on the way to answering these questions when we see that there is no such being as a self-sufficient, independent person. A person exists only in relationship with other persons. Apart from the interaction of two or more persons, it is impossible even to imagine personality. Speech, for example, is almost the first mark of human personality. Yet speech is unthinkable except in a social relationship. And there is never a break in the relationship. Positively or negatively, the individual never stops influencing, and receiving from, other individuals.

The interaction of persons creates institutions, cultures, ways of life. And these, in turn, act upon persons. It is, therefore, never possible to draw a line between the personal and the social. All of the human world is personal and all of it is social.

To change institutions you must, in some degree, change people. To change people you must also change institutions, since the people are not, even for a moment, out from under the influence of the institutions. This means something important for "evangelism" as well as for "social action." You cannot, in chronological sequence, convert a person to Christ and then, sometime later, teach him to apply his "personal religion" to race relations or international affairs. These relationships are a part of his inner being. You cannot get beneath them to a place where the soul is "alone with God." What would this soul be, that exists in isolation from the universal life? So, personal action is social action and social action is personal action; if the labels are a necessary convenience, they stand for no reality in the Gospel or in life. The church member who doesn't know if he believes in social action is practicing it all the time, and having it practiced on him. The only question left open is *how* he acts socially and for what ends.

The Place of Social Institutions

Such statements may seem too elemental for recapitulation. If so, we have had the theory but have not understood the implications. Perhaps it is the nature and place of social institutions that needs clarification. We are not as independent of them as some incline to believe, nor are they as independent of human action as others seem to assume. Every response to man or to God is a response of a person living in a given social environment. The American praying in his church cannot put himself in a wholly spiritual and non-material position. The character and habits of his American institutions—family, political, economic—are a part of his inner being. He is, even at church, in community—and in a particular community. Yet he is not completely the product, or the victim, of his social environment. Because he is made in the image of God (a spiritual being), he can to some extent stand outside his environment, appraising it and freeing himself from its limitations. Since he can do this he can also change the environment. We are neither completely free nor completely bound.

The Christian, therefore, gives his attention to social institutions and systems, not *in addition* to his personal life but as an inseparable part of his life. He acknowledges what we call his social responsibility because it is, in the profoundest sense of the word, *his* responsibility. He understands that God acts through all institutions, whatever labels we put on them. When the church member turns from worship in the church to a meeting of UNESCO or of the NAM or the CIO or one of the political parties, he is still in a place where God is present and man responds.

The Church in a Community of Persons

It will be said that, just the same, there is a difference between "secular" and "religious" concerns. Surely, only to this extent, that we set aside some days for concentration on the meaning of all days and have one institution, the church, whose purpose it is to help us live like children of God in every area. This makes it possible to say that the church is "divine" (sacred, important, good), not to the degree in which it takes us away from the rest of life but precisely in the measure that it stands in the center of human thought and action. It is the mission of the church to interpret the ways of God with men, the God who works continuously and everywhere. How can the church do this unless it studies all of life—economics, politics, the popular press, art, and the rest. Admonition is not enough. General principles are not enough. The principle is almost meaningless until we take it into concrete situations. This means research, analysis, experiment, discussions. It means, in fact, not parting company with the God who is in all of life. In this fashion we work toward a true and living community of persons.

The Continuous Activity of God

The living God acts. It is the Christian faith that the continuous activity of God in our world was brought to climax in the unique event of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What is of central importance for us is not the exact meaning of the words reported from his ministry but the fact that in him

God "broke through" into our world, became incarnate in human form. This is not the place to argue the truth of this belief. Let us only assert here that the whole of Christian faith and history rests upon it. That Christ was Teacher and Example is important. More important is the simple fact of His being. Not His words but He, himself, is the answer to our deepest questions. What is God? The answer: He is creative and redeeming action. Where is God? The answer: He is here, among men, in our world, in every human problem and action.

The doctrine of the Incarnation means far more than that God assumed the form of a human body. The body is the symbol of the greater fact—that the world as we know it, its forms and structures, is the creation and the dwelling place of the Most High. How can a Christian think that the "material" and the "physical" are of a lower order when he has before him the tremendous fact of the Incarnation? The Gospel is the assurance that God participates (weak word, but all words are weak here) in the life of His world in a profounder sense than we dreamed.

In so far as we think of the world in Christian terms we understand that systems and ways of life must constantly change. The creating and redeeming God cannot leave anything as it now is. We fear change because, our faith in God being weak, we imagine that our security rests on terrestrial foundations. Trying to make these temporal foundations permanent, we become idolaters and resist the creative spirit of God. What we should mainly fear is that men and women will resist change until the necessary changes can come only through violent action. But when the violent upheavals come they are signs of the mercy and judgment of God, as well as being witness to man's waywardness.

The Freedom of Man

The free human response to God. If human life has any meaning at all, if, indeed, it is not so devoid of meaning that the mind cannot imagine the condition, man can make affirmative response to God. Complete determination of life by blind

forces outside ourselves makes everything, including the determinist's words, meaningless. But we are not as free as we sometimes suppose. We cannot rise completely above the past and the present. What is possible is partly determined by what is actual. And there is no way of short-circuiting the conditions under which man, at any given time, exists. In imagination we can leap far ahead, but the new cannot be fashioned out of altogether new materials; the existing realities, unsatisfactory as they often are, are the stuff from which the new realities must emerge. To cite one example, we cannot in the name of universalism spirit out of existence the present national units. We have to work with what is here, even as we try to overcome its limitations.

Man's Limitations from His Sin

Man's response to God is limited also by the littleness of his mind. But it is limited, chiefly, by his sinful nature. What is sin? Its essence is an incurable self-centeredness. This means that we never are able to see a situation in completely objective and impartial fashion. Always our thinking is conditioned, sometimes badly warped, by our own interests and experience. "We know in part and we prophesy in part." We cannot see life whole. This is merely a fact. What transforms the fact into sin is our effort to impose our partial views on the whole of life. The obviously bad man is one who deliberately and ruthlessly tries to impose his will on others; his egoism is given free rein. The "good" person is less consistently and deliberately egoistic but he also suffers from the urge to make his good the whole good and his truth the whole truth. Sin confuses us and makes us forget we are not God. It confuses liberals and conservatives, employers and labor leaders, clergymen and laymen, politicians and their critics. We all labor under the impediment.

If we apply this truth to the nations, it is quite apparent that communist Russia is a flagrant example of the nation whose objective concern for world welfare is corrupted by personal and national egoism. This talking democracy and actually serv-

ing tyranny is sin writ large. From our, non-Russian, vantage point we see this clearly. What we see obscurely, if at all, is the fact that the American's desire to "stop communism" is not a thing of unadulterated purity; it is compounded with our own desire for power and with our pride. The Russians can see this better than we. "There is none righteous, no not one, for all have sinned. . . ."

Emancipation from Sin by God's Grace

It is the Christian faith that the grace of God can do something about sin. What can it do? When a man understands the nature of his sinfulness—how he is always trying to project himself and his "good" upon the whole of life, how he always finds reasons for resisting change when it threatens his private good, or favors change, partly, for inadmissible reasons—then, through this understanding he is already partly delivered from sin. The disability is not completely removed but, as Paul's magnificent phrase has it, "the *power* of sin is broken." There is a wonderful measure of emancipation, if very little actual perfection. He who admits, "I am biased, partial, self-centered, moved mainly by unacknowledged personal interests," and follows this confession with earnest effort to get himself out of the center and see life whole, has experienced the grace of God, breaking the power of his sin. But he who is unaware of his bondage is in bondage indeed.

This emancipation is the gift of God. It is not a human achievement. And it is never a cause for self-satisfaction, for the divine light that lifts the darkness also reveals the extent of our involvement in the universal human frailty. The "saved" sinner is thankful that God has opened his eyes. He is no longer under so much pressure from within to assert himself over his fellowmen. He is one with them in a common need of God's forgiving grace.

The bearing of these Christian doctrines upon the international situation will be seen in greater clarity and detail as we seek to discern the actual meaning of present world upheavals.

THE MEANING OF WORLD UPHEAVALS

It is not required of any of us that we understand completely the events of our time. Complete comprehension cannot be required because it is an impossibility. What is required, at least for those who wish, on the one hand, to make a little contribution toward a better world and, on the other, to have a reasonable degree of inner peace, is a *working interpretation* of what is going on.

There is, to be sure, a kind of peace of mind to be had by "leaving it all to God." The words have a pious sound but we may wonder if God is pleased by such intellectual and spiritual surrender. And how are we to do the will of God if we decline the effort to understand the meaning of our troubles and the goals of the forces creating such turmoil?

Scapegoat Thinking

Peace of mind, of a sort, may also be gained by resting in the conviction that a generally satisfactory world is temporarily bedeviled by communists or, perhaps, by rigid opponents of change, or by politicians or agitators. A full list of "those responsible" would include New Dealers, Republicans, Socialists, social planners, labor leaders, isolationists, internationalists, appeasers, Harry Truman, the late Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Tse-tung, the Roman Catholic Church, the Jews, militarists, pacifists, secularists, Herbert Hoover, and Dean Acheson. It would also include scientists (who invented weapons of mass destruction), Christians (who "don't practice what they preach"), teachers (who "have done such a poor job of educating us"), liquor dealers, gamblers, and—but that will be enough. Few of us are not on someone's list of chief offenders.

Scapegoat thinking reduces mental turmoil by simplifying cause and cure. "The reasons for our unhappy situation are plain and our duty is also plain." The defect in such "thinking" lies in the fact that no individual, no group, and no nation can possibly be responsible for a social convulsion of such proportions as the one now shaking our world. Not even all contem-

porary men and women taken together are responsible, since our major social trials have their roots deep in history. We overestimate the power, for evil and for good, of contemporary individuals, groups, and nations. Russia, for example, did not create the conditions which contribute so greatly to her influence. The United States, though it may wound our pride to admit it, did not put Mao in power in China.

This does not mean that we can do nothing to guide events; it only means that we are not as influential as we sometimes imagine—especially when we are looking for someone to blame, or when we are asking that our own program be given the right of way.

The Difficulties in Pinpointing Blame

This thought is important. Let us pursue it a little further. The thinking of all of us would be more helpful if we trained ourselves to look farther and deeper for both cause and cure of the disorder that afflicts us. Somewhere there is a wise balance between the fatalism that sees current situations inevitably growing out of the preceding situations, clear back to the beginning of things, and, on the other hand, the tendency to believe that if only this leader or that nation had not done this or had done that we would not be in trouble.

The act of the moment may be big with destiny, as when, for example, the United States decided not to join the League of Nations or when France and Britain declined to stand by Czechoslovakia or when our government decided to ask for United Nations resistance to the Korean aggressors. But in all such cases profound social and historical forces are at work and the decision-makers are not as free as, say, an automobile driver making up his mind which way to turn. We may, indeed, pronounce this action or that inaction a mistake—but it is altogether probable that the responsibility for it cannot be pinpointed as simply as we suppose. Even Hitler could not have created his Nazi state without the materials provided by World War I and the world-wide depression.

All of this adds up to a plea for a more patient search for basic trends and meanings, less recrimination, less demand for simple "solutions." Mr. Walter Lippmann said in a recent column that to ask for a "solution" of our world upheavals is about like asking whether the Pope or the Emperor had the best "solution" for a Europe struggling through the final stages of feudalism. Mighty social forces are at work in our time. For many decades they have been moving toward climax.

Not in the time of those now living, so far as we can see, is our world likely to settle down to the comparative calm which prevailed in the one hundred years between the end of the Napoleonic wars and the beginning of the first World War—though perhaps those who are now young children will begin to see a measure of stabilization. God is at work on our societies. Of that we may be sure. Since men and women are not gods but beings who cannot see very far and who persist in bad ways to their own hurt, God is unable to take them ahead without pain and confusion.

We Can See the Main Goals Ahead

The upheaval of our times is immensely complicated but if we look closely at it, it does not appear, after all, to be merely unlimited confusion. There are discernible meanings and directions. We can see, at least in the large, why we are where we are and toward what main goals we are headed. More particularly, there is no need to wonder if God has forsaken His world. On the contrary, even if we remember, as we should, that it is both unseemly and dangerous to be too certain about the purposes of God in any historical era, still the Christian's faith provides him with a fairly good interpretation and fairly clear goals toward which he can direct his energies. If our God is the great God revealed in the Bible and if we understand the human situation as the Christian religion understands it, we may even find our faith strengthened by our present tribulations.

Let us turn now to an examination of *four central aspects of the world upheaval* and ask what our response as Christians ought to be.

I. TOWARD A WORLD COMMUNITY OF PERSONS

We are now living in what has been called "the destructive phase of nationalism." This means that nationalism was, in its beginnings and for a time, a constructive and helpful development in the world's life but has now become an obstacle to its further development. The struggle to move out of the system of sovereign national units into a real world community of persons is proving as difficult as it is necessary. That is the gist of the matter. If we are to relate ourselves intelligently to the struggle we must look at it more closely.

The Nature of Modern Nationalism

Nationalism, as we know it today, is a modern phenomenon. It had its beginnings near the end of the Middle Ages, was given a big push forward in the French Revolution, and came to full flower in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nationalism is, of course, not the same thing as nationality or patriotism. A nation is a sovereign political state whose inhabitants may or may not have racial, linguistic, and cultural unity. Not until quite recently, since about the time of the first World War, has "nationality" been taken to refer to a group of persons speaking the same language and observing the same customs. The idea that each group having a common ethnic origin should have its own nation-state did not arise until this very recent period. This is to say that the modern world has tried to establish sharper lines of division between groups of people, to identify the various groups more clearly and assign to them more specialized and limited loyalties than was the case before.

As the *Encyclopedia Britannica* puts it, "In the first fifteen centuries of the Christian era the ideal was the universal world-state, not the loyalty to any separate political entity." The Holy Roman Empire, which began with the coronation of Charlemagne in 800 A.D. and endured for about 700 years, included almost all of central Europe, down to Rome. Throughout history, until modern times, the emphasis was on inclusiveness

and universality, rather than on the exclusive state and the limited loyalty.

We need not here examine the reasons for the break-up of inclusive dominions and the emergence of the present sovereign nation-states. We may say only that it was a necessary development—necessary, that is, to the development of political and religious freedom and to the growth of what we now call “free enterprise.” From the time of the Protestant Reformation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, down to the present, the struggle for national independence and unity and the concomitant dissolution of empires have been, in the main, a necessary requirement of true human progress. The division of the world into sovereign nation-states made possible many kinds of individual growth and cultural progress which, so far as we can see, would not have been possible without the division.

The break-up of inclusive empires and the creation of exclusive nations is still going on. Since 1945 some 600 million people have attained national independence. How interesting to observe that our contemporaries, almost in the same breath, ask for universal political institutions and cheer the setting up of new nations, such as India, Pakistan, and Indonesia. Nothing more clearly illustrates the fact that we are living in a “time between the times.” It also indicates that a necessary and beneficial historical movement may, even before it is complete, become an obstacle to further progress.

While, therefore, we must say that the emergence of our present “system” of independent national sovereignties was a helpful development, and not a terrible error, and while we must encourage the emergence of still more independent nation-states (Indo-China, for example), we must, at the same time, work for the establishment of laws and political institutions which cut across the present national boundaries.

Why Sovereign National Units Are Coming to an End

For two reasons, principally, the day of separate independent nations is coming to an end. The first reason has so often been



presented and documented that we need not spend much time on it. It is simply that in today's interdependent world no nation is able to achieve security or welfare alone.

Geographical distances which once prohibited, or made very difficult, the development of inter-continental cooperation and institutions have now been so reduced that the separating ocean of yesterday is the uniting highway of today, and the great land masses are instantly traversed by our voices and only a little more slowly by carriers of goods and persons.

In war, as in peace, the national demarcations are rapidly losing whatever significance they once had. No nation, however powerful, is any longer able to defend itself alone. The long-distance bomber and the guided missile have wiped out national boundaries as lines of defense. For the United States, airplane bases around the world are now a necessity, however inharmonious their establishment may be with ideas of national sovereignty. Far-flung military alliances are, likewise, a requirement of the defense of the homeland. Strategic materials needed for defense must be found and protected, and if their development and protection creates embarrassing political problems in a world of jealous national sovereignties, so much the worse for national sovereignty.

No Security Without Global Arrangements

There is no security now save through global arrangements. Powerful nations will not permit the national sensibilities of weaker nations to put their existence in jeopardy; and weaker nations have no recourse save to join in systems of collective security. It is not so much that the strong nations will immorally override the hesitations of their weaker neighbors as that all nations are now compelled to disregard much of the code of international behavior based on unreal conceptions of independent, self-determined nations. So, the necessities of national self-preservation collide with the old order of national units and the old order goes down under the pressure of the new fact.

It is not only in Western Europe that defense against Russia

pushes the nations toward federation. In the Far East, the new Japan cannot survive without United States' protection and the United States cannot afford to let Japan slip out of our protective ring. Hence, to the almost universally lauded Treaty with Japan the United States adds arrangements, not universally approved, for the establishment of U.S. military bases on the islands. Are the arrangements incompatible with the noble treaty? Rather say that, from either the Japanese or the American viewpoints, a scrupulous "respect for national self-determination" is incompatible with the necessities of self-preservation.

When the United States, or Russia for that matter, is accused of using her power to force weaker nations into line it ought to be remembered that, until the nations build a real supra-national authority, we have no alternative to the exercise of authority by the nations that have the power to exercise it. The only present alternative is chaotic national going-it-alone—and, consequently, defenselessness against a strong aggressor. Another way of putting it is to say that in the interim between the anarchy of independent national sovereignties and the establishment of a world political authority the strong nations not only will but must assert a leadership which sometimes will border on control.

In this interim period the real objection is not to the leadership-control but to its exercise by a nation or a group of nations which cynically seeks to extend its own power or its own particular way of life. If it is obvious, in the present situation, that Russia misuses her power position, and would misuse more power if she had it, it should also be clear that the United States cannot be trusted not to abuse her position of leadership. American Christians, who understand the universal prevalence of sinful impulses, should see this clearly. But their effort should not, futilely, be directed against the exercise of their nation's power; it should be employed in helping to create, as rapidly as possible, a world organization with power to enforce international law. Of this, more later.

The Interdependence of Peacetime Life

Aside from defense against military attack, the peacetime life of the world is now so interwoven that the nations are being pushed, against their strong emotional inclinations, into concerted planning and action. Scarce raw materials can no longer be preempted by those who get there first with the strongest backing. The international flow of information and ideas and the increasing volume of international travel are making the word "foreigner" an anachronism. Swift communications, as we shall see later, are rendering literally impossible a situation in which Americans, for example, acknowledge only the intermittent obligations of humanitarianism for the welfare of people in other countries. The huge gap between different areas of our world with respect to education and living standards presents us now with the picture of a house, some of whose rooms are on a high and firm foundation while other rooms sag in the mud. It does not make much difference any more that one room is set aside for Americans, another for Frenchmen, another for Iranians, etc. It is one house. Christianity said so long ago. Applied science has now made it a fact, against which all our limited national attachments cannot prevail.

The American—politician or private citizen—who still sees his country as a well-heeled Uncle who ought, by right, to think only of himself but may on occasion elect to be generous with his foreign relatives, is still living emotionally in a world that has ceased to exist. Not all the iron curtains Russia may run up, or the protective curtains other countries may create in reprisal, can change the fact of "one world."

Concern for Person-Centered Societies

There is a second major reason for the breakdown of independent nation-states and of the nationalism growing out of them. And here we come to a consideration of profound interest to Christians: the emergence of *increased concern to achieve person-centered societies*. The emphasis in Christianity is on the person. Economic and political arrangements, ecclesiastical

institutions, nations and empires have, in themselves, no ultimate worth. The touchstone is the person. The goal is the welfare of persons. Two things are implicit in person-centered thinking, or in a person-centered society. First, no other person and no human institution can demand the individual's ultimate allegiance. The final decisions of life must be left to the person's interpretation of the will of God. What we do with our lives is, ultimately, a matter for which we give account to God, and to Him alone. Second, the first and final fact about a person is simply that he is a person, a being made in the divine image. There must be no discrimination against him, or in his favor, on the grounds of race or nationality.

Consider how these two facts clash, head on, with the nation-centered thinking characteristic of most modern people. Nationalism has been defined as "a state of mind in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due to the nation-state." This is, we must agree, the central characteristic of nationalism, that it sets up the nation, as over against the rest of humanity, as the object of supreme loyalty and that it tends, at least, to displace conscience and God as the final arbiters. Even in the United States, whose national roots are in Christian concepts, men and women are under heavy pressure, in peace as in war, to accommodate themselves in the most vital matters to the "national interest" or to "the American way of life" or to "the demands of patriotism." The severest indictment we can think of is the word, "Un-American." In Great Britain the word is, though with perhaps less of moral condemnation, "Un-British."

Nationalism has, in fact, led to nothing less than idolatry—the displacement of God by a temporal and limited object. The conscience of men and women is increasingly restive under this absolutizing of the nation. The more Christianity insists on the primacy of persons and the more our attention is directed to the worth and welfare of individuals, the world over, the more difficult it is for the nation, any nation, to demand our final

allegiance. For to hand over one's conscience to the state is a radically unspiritual and immoral act. When men and women acquire the habit of judging their nation by a higher standard and insist on relating themselves to truths and goals higher than the nation, the foundations of nationalism have been undermined.

The phrase, "the common man," has been subjected to no little criticism, some of it scornful. It will serve, nevertheless, as a symbol of a primary and growing emphasis in the contemporary world. For the first time in history, the common man, as distinguished from royalties, aristocracies, and the privileged few, is being taken seriously. "Social justice" has, as its central meaning, the purpose of fashioning our societies in the interests of man, as man. We begin to look past the circumstances of race and nationality to the person, whoever and wherever he may be. He is white, brown, black, yellow; he is upper class, middle class, lower class; he is an Englishman, a German, a Russian, an African, an American. Interesting—but not important when it comes to his basic rights and needs and his claim on our consideration.

Christianity, not to speak of the prophets of other religions, has always preached this doctrine. A thousand poets and seers have said it. But now, for the first time, governments and whole societies are trying to slough off the vestiges of the aristocratic idea. What this means for the nations is clear: the emphasis shifts from the rights and well-being of the national group to the rights and well-being of the individual man and woman, regardless of nationality. While the nations still struggle for equality or prestige our real concern moves on to equality between human beings.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Herein lies the profound significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, prepared and adopted by the United Nations. The Magna Charta is a British declaration. The "Bill of Rights" (first ten amendments to the American Constitution)

is a national standard. Now, for the first time, men, as men, sit around a table and, looking past the circumstances of nationality, set up a standard for—human beings. The struggle between the old habit of looking at people primarily as “nationals” and the new idea of seeing them simply as persons is highlighted in the debate on this question: May individuals and non-governmental groups appeal directly to the United Nations when their rights under the Declaration are denied, or shall nations only, through their governments, be permitted to make representations? The question has not been settled. One can scarcely be in doubt how it ought to be answered. Over the heads of all governments and over all national boundary lines, men and women reach out to each other as fellow human beings and appeal to the common conscience of mankind.

Such, in bare outline, is *the meaning and the goal of one major aspect of our world upheaval. We are struggling to substitute for the nationalisms, which no longer are valid or helpful, institutions and habits which fit the new facts and will assist in creating a true world community of persons.*

Support of the United Nations

Such an interpretation provides a basic directive. When we must make decisions on immediate steps there will be plenty of room for debate, but the argument will be about methods and not about primary goals. Those who accept this interpretation will, for example, be earnest supporters of the United Nations. For they will see in the organization the best attempt of which we have thus far been capable, to bring the new international order to birth. They will understand that the United Nations is imperfect in design and weak in practice. (How could it be otherwise?) They will indulge in no cynical dismissals of the organization. Their energies will be given to serious study of its successes and failures, with the purpose of helping to make it a more adequate instrument. They will see the profound significance of the work of the Specialized Agencies, which, apart from weaknesses elsewhere, are steadily laying the

foundations of international, or supra-national, cooperation. They will urge their own government never to deal with an international problem on a unilateral basis when there is a possibility of handling it through the United Nations. They will not resent restrictions on our own nation's freedom of action because they know that unlimited freedom for national action is precisely the practice that has brought us so much woe and because a truly international approach to world problems is now the only approach that fits the facts. Their question will be: since a strong and developing world organization is clearly indispensable, how can we strengthen what we have?

Trade Agreements

There are other ways of moving toward the goal. The Reciprocal Trade Agreements remove barriers to the flow of international trade, without which there can be little progress toward a united world. For example, the decision of the American government and people whether they will permit Japanese tuna fish (a major industry in Japan) to compete with American tuna without tariff restrictions will be strong evidence of whether this nation understands the requirements of a world community of persons.

The international exchange of students under the Fulbright Act, and travel in other countries, when conducted with an open mind and a serious purpose, help to lay the foundations of world community.

The Ecumenical and Missions Movement

At the very center of the effort to break down the national walls of separation stands the ecumenical movement in the churches. The World Council of Churches provides a meeting place where men and women talk together, not primarily as citizens of this or that country but as members of the family of God. Christian missions have not always and everywhere been free of the nationalistic approach, but at their truest and best they help powerfully to lift up the person behind the differences

of nation and race. Since it is the Christian conception of man that is the radical dissolver of circumstantial barriers between men, the support of the ecumenical movement and of Christian missions should have first claim on those who pray for the end of divisive nationalism.

This part of the revolution of our time puts us all under heavy strain. It presents extremely difficult problems to government. It is a cause of arguments and strife. The roots of the old order run deep in our emotions. We have looked to our own nations for security and, if it is plain that they can no longer provide it, we have as yet no international authority to take the place of the national bulwark. So, in this "time between the times" we are deeply unsettled. Once, however, we stop looking backward, and understand the meaning and direction of our struggle, we can live with a basic peace of mind and can work with greater patience and courage toward the goal.

II. THE REVOLT AGAINST COLONIALISM

If the contemporary world had no other major problem it would be hard put to it to handle the consequences of the worldwide revolt against the colonial system. To understand the meaning of this revolt we must remind ourselves of a few facts.

Types of Colonies

There have been two kinds of colonies: (1) areas of the world explored and settled primarily by people from older nations who were looking for freedom and a chance to begin a new life under more favorable circumstances (the colonies which revolted against England and formed the United States were in this category); (2) areas brought under the control or into the possession of industrialized nations, primarily for the purpose of gaining markets and raw materials. The years 1870-1903 are notable for the most spectacular development of this second kind of colonialism. In that period France, for example, acquired ninety thousand square miles in Asia and two million, six hundred thousand square miles in Africa; Belgium acquired

sovereignty over the vast expanse of the Congo Free State in Africa; Germany, in the space of six years, took under her flag a million square miles of African territory and, later, established dominion over hundreds of South Sea islands, a port on the Chinese coast, and Turkey; British imperialist expansion, reaching its zenith under Disraeli, had created the empire "on which the sun never sets." The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Denmark had great colonial possessions obtained in earlier times.

Writing in 1928, Parker Thomas Moon could say, "More than half of the world's land surface and more than a billion human beings (approximately one-half of the world's population) are included in the colonies and 'backward countries' dominated by a few imperialist nations."*

We are not here concerned to pronounce a moral judgment against that expansionist thrust which brought more than half of the world under the domination of a few nations. The forces behind imperialism—exporters, importers, shipping magnates, bankers, the military, diplomats, sometimes missionaries, outlet for over-population, economic nationalism, national honor—were, in their totality, irresistible. It is difficult to see how the demand for coffee, cocoa, tea, and sugar, or the later demand for rubber could have been stopped from founding empires. Nor need we question the sincerity of the Englishman's conviction that he was destined to bear "the white man's burden," or the Frenchman's belief in France's *mission civilisatrice*, or Germany's faith in the beneficial results of spreading *Deutsche Kultur*, or President McKinley's statement, concerning the Philippines, "that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them as our fellowmen for whom Christ also died."

The Fact of Colonial Exploitation

It must, however, be observed that, taken as a whole, colo-

* Thomas Parker Moon, *Imperialism and World Politics*, New York: Macmillan Company, 1928.

nialism is a system under which the many are exploited for the benefit of the few. Despite a certain inevitable quality in its development and despite some "civilizing" and "uplifting" results, the blunt fact remains: vast territories were seized without benefit of consent, vast wealth was channeled out of the colonies and countless lives were used up with almost complete moral indifference. Since most of the "natives" were colored, the economic exploitation was compounded with racial discrimination, ranging from polite condescension to brutal treatment. The tiny percentage of the population for which schools were available, after decades or even centuries of imperial rule, represented, as Professor Moon says, "heroic endeavors on the part of the missionaries and pitifully inadequate effort on the part of government."

In most colonies home industry was deliberately discouraged in order to protect the industries of the governing countries. More important, perhaps, little was done to train people for future self-government. The colonial record of the United States is comparatively good, but honesty compels the recognition that this was the result of the vast territory and resources of the homeland as much as of our benevolence.

Movement Toward Emancipation Has Just Begun

If all these things are well-known, it is necessary to keep them in mind if we are to understand the full force of the present revolt. India, after about two centuries of foreign rule, is free, but in scores of ways her long history as a subject nation and her position as a part of heavily colonial Asia affect her relationship to the rest of the world. As was pointed out earlier, since 1945 more than 600 million people have achieved their independence. But the movement toward emancipation has only begun. As an accepted part of the world picture, the day of colonialism is finished; in actuality it is far from finished and decades will go by before the strains and strife connected with this problem cease to trouble us.

Indo-China provides vivid illustration. French rule has been

far from enlightened. It is one of the real tragedies—and headaches—of contemporary history that, instead of being in a position to encourage and help the people of that country to gain their freedom, the United States, in order to stop communist expansion, finds itself backing the old imperialist order—or so it seems to the people of Asia. (France still owns 4,441,884 square miles of territory outside the home country, with a population of more than 70 million. Add mandated territories comprising another four and a-half million square miles and populations totaling another 70 million.) Today Asia is in the headlines; tomorrow it will be Africa.

Some Important Conclusions

Let us draw some conclusions. First and most important, the long smoldering revolt against colonial status now reaches a climax. Fundamentally, *justice is with the revolting peoples, and men of good will must welcome the movement and help it along.* It is not something to deplore; it would indeed be cause for dismay if colonialism with its basic exploitation could go on.

Second, there are, in this area, no easy solutions. The moral sense of mankind should, and does, favor emancipation but the system has for a long time been an integral part of our world and, specifically, an integral part of the economies of many countries. With the best will in the world, it is not simple for the Netherlands, Britain, or France to adjust their economies to the situation caused by the loss of colonies and dependencies.

Third, Americans should be slow to preach to the imperial powers, but men everywhere need to understand that it is the accumulated injustices of the past that are piling up troubles for the present. The only mature response is to accept the just retribution and apply our intelligence to the building of a more just order for all men. We need the prophet crying "Your sins have aroused the wrath of God and His oppressed." We need also a patient and wise statesmanship, backed by informed public opinion, to make the necessary and complicated changes.

It would be pleasant, to put it mildly, if, hearing the God of

justice say, "The old order had in it too much injustice. Change it!" we replied, "We have heard and it is done." But human history does not, in that easy fashion, move from worse to better. Men of limited intelligence and with strong egoistic drives must deal with problems almost beyond their capacity. So, the great changes cannot come without strife and tumult. It is the Christian faith that God is in the storm of social change, as well as in the still small voice of peaceful days.

III. REVOLT AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The African continent comprises 11 million, 300 thousand square miles, as against the 3 million, 740 thousand square miles of the United States. It is fabulously rich in natural resources. Its population is approximately 160 million. Only a small percent of the people living between Tunis and Cape Town can be identified as belonging to the white race. The Asian land-mass runs 4,500 miles from East to West and 4,000 miles from the northern Manchurian border to Singapore. Here also are vast riches, mostly undeveloped. With the exception of a handful, all of the people living in this area are colored. Add Japan, the Philippine Islands, Indonesia, Indo-China, with their total population in excess of 200 millions, all of them colored. Add the 15 million colored people in the United States and the 30 million of Indian ancestry in North, South, and Central America. The total of non-white people is two or more times as great as the total with white racial ancestry.

Some of the colored people (why we should call them colored when white is also a color, we have never been able to understand) are highly educated and some, the majority, are illiterate. Some live in highly developed countries, and some, again the majority, exist under primitive conditions.

The Resolve to End "White Supremacy"

But one thing the colored people of the world have in com-

mon: they are resolved to end the day of "White Supremacy." Their attitudes toward white people vary, from uneasy friendliness to profound suspicion and even hatred. This is the deep bond between them. And it is a deep bond. The bond runs from Communist Chinese to anti-Communist Indians—all Asiatic and all colored and all wary of or hostile toward white Westerners. It runs from India to Africa, from Korea to the colored population of the United States. Making allowance for possible exaggeration, one wonders if a stronger tie can be found binding so many in mutual sympathy and in mutual resolve.

The voice is one voice. It says, sometimes with quiet dignity, sometimes in strident tones, sometimes with suppressed fury, "Our dignity as human beings must be recognized. Not as a gift but as a right. No more segregation. No more doors closed to us that are open to white people. No more rough indignities and no more condescension. The day of discrimination on grounds of color is finished."

This revolution is shaking the world. It is a major factor in American politics, where candidates for office are appraised by both white and colored on the basis of their attitude toward the Civil Rights program. It is the major factor behind the desperate measures (Dixiecrats, Russell-for-President, etc.) of the white politicians in the southern "black belt." The various bids of the two major political parties for the Negro vote—chiefly in the North—may be an important factor in forcing a two-party system in the South.

The race issue is explosive in South Africa, reverberating in the meetings of the United Nations. It runs deep in the struggle between communism and democracy, the democracies under the handicap of being historically identified with white supremacy practices. It contributes greatly to the hostility of Communist China toward the West. It weakens our moral position among the Koreans, who do not enjoy being called "gooks." It is an important part of the story of Japan's attempt to drive the (white) Westerners out of Asia.

In a score of key areas the race issue pours static into the voice

from the West, speaking of the excellence of our way of life. For the record of the white man in his relations with his colored fellowmen is abominable before God and two-thirds of His people. Even if all the world's white people united tomorrow in disavowing discrimination and segregation the color issue would give us trouble for a long time. On the one side, there would still be the emotional difficulties of a guilty conscience and, on the other, wounds too deep to heal in one generation.

Here the Goal and the Wrong Are Clear

However difficult it may sometimes be to see the activity of God in other aspects of the world upheaval, here—let it be said without equivocation—we can be certain. The wrong is plain and the goal is clear. Christianity and democracy have no more central ethical doctrine than that persons as persons stand on an equal footing before God and before the law. Nor can white Christians ask for themselves brotherhood in everyday practice while reserving to theory or theology brotherhood with colored people. No doubt there will be differences on the wisest handling of racial issues and some differences in the speed with which we can move away from discriminatory practices. But the goal must be insisted on: equality in church, education, industry, government, and social life. To the question, "What will happen if the doors are opened?" the only answer is, "Stop trying to play God with the lives of His people. Open the doors. For the rest, your only worry is to devise the best ways to consummate the integration."

Ways to Contribute to World Order

Here is a simple, if not always an easy, way to make a contribution to world order. We can work to remove the racial barriers in our own communities and churches. We can let political leaders and aspirants to political office know that any ambiguity on this issue compromises their devotion to world justice and peace. In the matter of putting local, federal, and state laws on the side of equality, there may be room for argument. Yet this

much seems clear: in the United States at least, the educational process has been going on for a long time. In every major social reform the time arrives when law must protect and compel where persuasion is not yet effective. Nor is this necessarily a concession to unethical coercion. Laws and police power may also serve as God's instruments for helping His people.

On the world scale—not forgetting that every manifestation of this problem has world-wide significance—we can study the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and prepare ourselves for the discussion of the Covenant when it is adopted by the United Nations and presented to the Senate of the United States. Agencies working in Asia and Africa should, in addition to candid confession of the sin of discrimination in American life, tell the story of what has been accomplished in the past fifty years. We have made great progress. And this should be made known around the world. In an earlier day we might even have congratulated ourselves on this progress. But the pressure against the closed doors is now too insistent to warrant satisfaction with having opened them part way.

The God of justice and love is not dead, nor doth He sleep. The crumbling of the edifice of racial discrimination is evidence. And here, also, we may be saddened but we should not be surprised or dismayed that change is accompanied by much confusion and suffering.

IV. WELFARE FOR ALL

The historian, Arnold J. Toynbee, asks, in a recent article, what people living three hundred years from now will select as the outstanding feature of our twentieth century. Mr. Toynbee, as much as any living man, is at home in the history of civilizations and is accustomed to taking the long view. His answer to the question, therefore, carries weight. Here it is:

My own guess is that our age will be remembered chiefly neither for its horrifying crimes nor for its astonishing inventions, but for its having been the first age since the

dawn of civilization, some five or six thousand years back, in which people dared to think it practicable to make the benefits of civilization available for the whole human race.*

A Practical Objective

Mr. Toynbee's analysis is arresting and penetrating. He dares to say that "by comparison with the significance of this common twentieth century new ideal, the differences between the conflicting ideologies will—so I should guess—come to look both less important and less interesting than will be easily credible to anyone alive today." Let us summarize his argument. It is the "sudden vast enhancement of man's ability to make non-human nature produce what man requires from her" that has, "for the first time in history, made the ideal of welfare for all a practical objective instead of a mere utopian dream." Mr. Toynbee speaks of "the odious inequality that has hitherto been a distinguishing mark of civilizations" and says that it has become "inhuman to go on putting up with it—and still more inhuman to try to perpetuate (it) deliberately."

It was in North America, Mr. Toynbee reminds us, that the ideal of welfare for all first entered men's minds. "The sudden acquisition of immense new virgin resources made this vision seem practical." But in little more than 100 years North America's fields had been brought under cultivation and if we had possessed only agricultural resources the dream would have faded again, for there is not much new arable land left in the Temperate Zone. It was when we learned to harness mechanical power to technology, making possible a "permanent industrial revolution," that the attainment of a good standard of living for everyone became practical politics.

But what of the fact "that three-quarters of mankind are today still living the traditional life of an agricultural civilization in which there is no reserve of virgin soil and therefore no possibility of providing more than a tiny minority of the population

* "Not the Age of Atoms, But of Welfare for All," article in the *New York Times Magazine*, October 21, 1951.

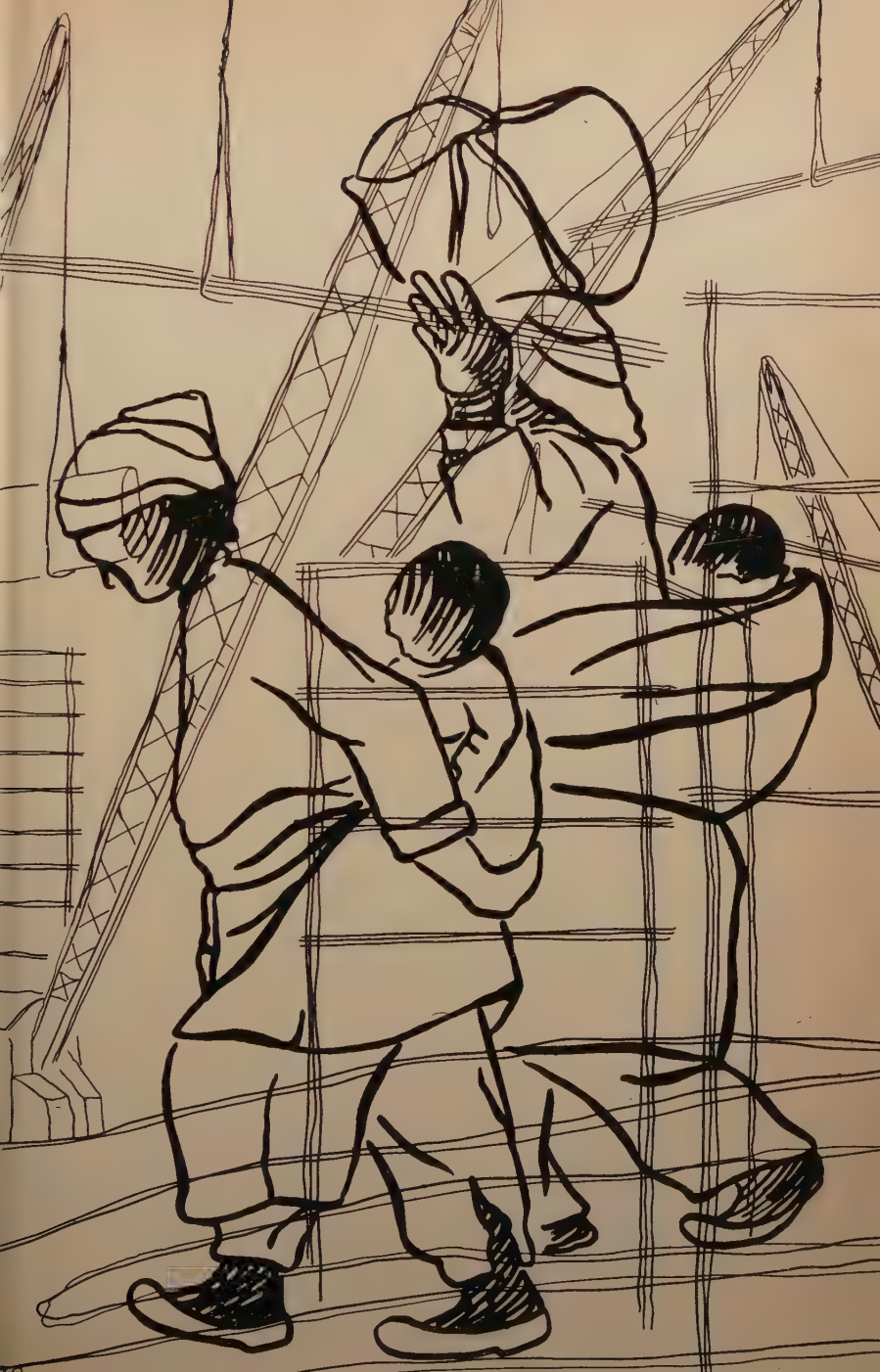
with anything better than bare subsistence out of agricultural production?" Our great resource is the industrial revolution which has "brought with it a hope for all mankind, from the prosperous American technician and farmer to the most miserable Chinese or Indian coolie, of breaking right through the iron limits to which the extension of the benefits of civilization has normally been subject in an agricultural society."

We should add to what Mr. Toynbee says the now fairly obvious fact, that a great new light is dawning on the minds of three-quarters of the human race. Where once misery was accepted with resignation, it is now brightened with a flaming hope. They have seen. They have heard. The resignation gives way to passionate demand. And at this point Mr. Toynbee in one sentence gives us, one would almost say, the whole picture of what is going on:

Asia and Africa are going to make an audacious attempt to catch up with the West *by a forced march*, and here lies communism's opportunity in a world in which the Russian ideology of communism is competing with the Western ideal of free enterprise for Asia's and Africa's allegiance. (Italics ours)

A Forced March to Greater Welfare

"Catch up with the West by a forced march!" No better phrase has been coined to state the fact. The difference between the slow climb of the West to its present high standard of living and the "forced march" of the underdeveloped areas is plain. We did not know what might be possible; they know, for the demonstration lies before their eyes. So, their movement is explosive, impatient. We in the West say to them: "You cannot change societies overnight. You must be patient. Our resources for helping you are limited. To travel from where you are to where we are will require many decades." All this is true, and the wisest heads in Asia and Africa understand it. But what we have to understand is that the pressures of the awakening millions on their own governments and on the world community are too strong to be met with cautionary words and little programs. This



is a revolution and a revolution, by definition, is not a slow overturning but an accelerated movement that must be met with accelerated response.

A Revolution Demanding Urgent Action

The people of the West, and particularly of the United States, must see this. Already China is lost, mainly because communist leadership knows better than we the urgency of the situation. Americans are removed by 175 years from their own revolution (the time when *we* would not wait) and they are also far removed from the revolutionary temper by the power and prosperity of their society. So, they preach peace when there is no peace. So, they offer little plans where only bold plans will suffice. To be sure, our resources, in materials, money, and personnel, are not unlimited; the tax burden is already onerous; there are a hundred factors which make it difficult to carry out the dynamic program of aid and leadership which the situation demands. *The central fact remains: two-thirds or three-fourths of humanity is in no mood for tarrying and if the United States and the United Nations cannot provide bold leadership and substantial help the results will not be to our liking.*

America Only on a Forced March to Military Power

Let us be more specific. The government of the United States is in two principal ways trying to meet the present crisis. To take care of the immediate threat of the forceful expansion of communist tyranny we have embarked upon a "forced march" to military power. This calls, not only for huge expenditures, bold plans of industrial development and a military mobilization unprecedented in peace time; it calls also for expert and courageous diplomatic work, as in pushing toward a European army and, at a deeper level, a European political federation. This latter job presents immense difficulties, with obstacles having their roots deep in European history. Old French-German suspicions must be dealt with. Britain's relations with the Commonwealth, as over against her relations with the continent, intrude themselves.

The desire of Germans for the unification of their sundered country in relation to the question of Western Germany's merging with the Atlantic community, puts a terribly complex problem on the conference tables. And, running through such politically explosive questions, is the delicate business of providing an American leadership that does not trespass on the rights and sensibilities of other nations.

But in this whole area we push forward with great vigor and ingenuity. Willingly, we vote fantastic sums for military uses. Without serious question, we give our young people to the armed forces. We stretch our diplomatic resources to the limit in overcoming obstacles to the European army and to European federation. Neither do we find the building of alliances in the Pacific beyond our capacity. We make mistakes and much remains to be done, but who, a few years ago, would have dared predict we would or could do so much?

Where Our Boldness Ends

The other chief part of our response to the crisis is long-term economic aid and Point IV. This is our program for dealing with the *basic* revolution of our time. It is our answer to the underlying situations which shake and threaten our world. It is our "answer to communism." What are we doing here? Toward building U.S. military power we appropriated, in 1951, over 50 billion dollars. The Mutual Security Act provided \$7.5 billion for foreign aid. Of this, nearly six billion dollars is for military items, plus about one billion for "economic aid," designed to strengthen the defense program in Europe. The balance, about \$400 million, is for economic aid, relief programs, and technical assistance to the Near East, Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and American Republics. The Point IV program is a part of the \$400 million, amounting to between 70 and 100 million dollars (1.3 per cent or less of the total foreign aid.) The statistics are difficult to understand but it appears that, of the 58 billions authorized by Congress in two appropriation acts,

around \$200 million dollars is being used for non-military, non-cold war aid to the areas named above.

This means that, in terms of money at least, we are bold indeed *until* we come to the measures that would cut the ground from under communism's appeal—and *then* we decide "there is a limit to what we can do."

But dollars are not the whole story. The effectiveness of the technical aid program is not to be measured only in terms of the money used, as Point IV administrators often remind us. The necessary agreements between the giving and receiving nations take time to negotiate no matter how much money is available. Trained personnel—agronomists, social workers, health experts—cannot be produced overnight, even with billions of dollars. There are *human* factors to be dealt with in Point IV aid that cannot be solved, or speeded up, by writing checks.

In March, 1952, both the Technical Cooperation Administration in our own State Department and the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration appeared to have more money than they could immediately use because of the difficulty in finding trained people for the projects that have been agreed upon. Precisely so! But in the military area we somehow find the people. In that sphere the motto is, "The difficult we do at once; the impossible takes a little longer." A high military officer who offered as many reasons for going slow as we are given by Point IV officials would be replaced by someone who has an adequate sense of urgency. And this would be demanded by a government and a public opinion that wants military power, and wants it fast. Consider the almost miraculous development of the atomic energy program. At that point the United States really went to town.

The conclusion seems inevitable. Neither government nor public opinion is yet convinced that the need of two-thirds of our world for practical help is as urgent as in truth it is. Unless we employ in this area the energy characteristic of military planning, it is going to be another story of "too little and too late."

In the third month of 1952 the Technical Cooperation Administration had 619 experts in the field, in thirty countries. Something is being done. The very fact that we can now point to many examples of excellent aid in raising living standards—stories like that of Horace Holmes in India—only makes it the more lamentable that the total program is as yet merely a *drop in the bucket*.

Focus for Action

Christians can, in four specific ways, help to give this most promising and creative effort for peace and justice the priority it deserves. *First, we can try, through every communications means at our disposal, to give our people a true picture of the situation in the underdeveloped areas.* This will not be easy. Americans cannot, from their lofty material plane, readily take in the facts about the hunger and misery in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere. There is something almost hopeless about standing up after a turkey dinner in an American church and convincing the well-fed, well-dressed, well-housed congregation that two-thirds of their fellowmen are being driven to desperate measures by sheer want. But this is what we must, with facts, pictures and persuasion, try to do.

In the *Social Action* issue on "The Christian Faith and Public Opinion" we sought to indicate the tremendous importance of the Protestant Church finding ways for more adequately aiding communicators in the popular press to keep the American people informed on crucial matters, such as the plight of men and women in underdeveloped areas. The magazine issue also indicated the deficiencies and potentialities of the church press in becoming a force for change of American opinion on international policy.

Second, we can help our people to understand clearly the purpose and character of the Point IV program. One critic has written that it is "a plan for subsidizing the economy of the backward nations." It is, of course, nothing of the kind. Others

think of it simply as "another give-away program," which is about as far as possible from the truth. Excellent material is now available in pamphlet form for clearing up misconceptions and presenting the true picture. (See "Good Reading" at the end of this article.) Social action committees, mission societies, Councils of Churches, and other local church organizations can hardly take on a better project than this. They can reach laymen who work with local newspapers, radio and T.V. stations and who conduct educational programs for various labor and business groups to interest them in material which will make the community more aware of the issues at stake in the Point IV program.

Third, United States Senators and Congressmen should be told of our interest in this program. We can hardly blame government for not taking the program more seriously if our representatives sense no real demand from the people. The second issue of this series on "Christian Community" has indicated the importance of political participation which goes beyond voting. If we have been willing to assume responsibility for "ringing doorbells" and for other activities within one or other of the major parties, if we have sought to influence the position taken by special interest groups, we have a much greater chance of influencing policy positions of Congressmen than if we confined our politics to the ballot box.

Fourth, we can publicize information about the kind of experts and technicians needed for work in the field. We can help to recruit qualified people. A social action committee in a Mid-Western church has distributed a "call" for a "vast army of goodwill," meaning, essentially, Point IV workers. The "call" is based on a proper sense of urgency and looks in the right direction. But this army, like any other, must consist of trained people and its members must be far more carefully selected than in the usual kind of army. Information on this point may be secured by writing to Mr. William W. Young, Senior Projects Officer, Food and Natural Resources Division, Technical Cooperation Administration, Department of State, Washington, D.C.

DECISION-MAKING BY CHRISTIANS

We have examined four central aspects of world upheaval. The struggle to move out of the old world of independent, competing nation-states into the new world of global loyalties and institutions; the revolt against colonialism; the ending of the dominion of the white race; the demand that food, health, and education be made available to all men. Can we not say, concerning these profound social forces, that they reveal the spirit of God at work in our world? Is it not clear that the main goals toward which we seem to be moving are in harmony with central Christian ideas? And are not the basic questions for all of us, "Do I see the defects and the sin in the old ways? Do I earnestly want a true world community, the recognition of the right of all peoples to be free of exploitation for the benefit of others, a human and spiritual approach to all men, and welfare for all? Am I earnestly searching for the best ways to move toward these goals?"

Relation of Fundamental Attitudes and Specific Proposals

Our response to world upheaval begins with a question of fundamental insights and attitudes. On this level lies the most important work of Christians, for here the imperatives of the Gospel seem to be plain. But Christians must do more than talk about the large goals. It is a mark of immaturity, even of moral irresponsibility, to turn away from specific decisions on specific proposals. But here we must understand that, while the Christian religion sets our main directions, gives us a mind-set and a controlling approach, it does not furnish all the specific guidance we need.

To claim positively that Christianity demands, or is against, the rearmament of Germany, the denial of Formosa to the Chinese Communist Government, Federal Fair Employment legislation, the immediate granting of independence to Indo-China, specific provisions of the Point IV program, not only divides Christians; much more important, to claim Christian sanctions for current legislative, or non-governmental, actions, for eco-

conomic orders or international institutions, is to claim the authority of the eternal divine for the human temporal. It is a form of idolatry. Christians have insisted that the Word of God demanded all sorts of things: wars of conquest, feudalism, slavery, witch-burning, socialism, capitalism, nationalism, world government. The record should teach us to hesitate a long while before identifying the Gospel with specific actions and institutions, no matter how passionately we believe in them.

How, then, shall Christians proceed in their indubitable obligation to relate Christianity to the contemporary world? The first step is to gain as much clarity as we can concerning God's eternal purposes, His relation to mankind and His will for it. Our main resource here is the Bible and, specifically, God's revealing of Himself in Jesus Christ. Christian history and the experience of the Church is a secondary source. To be concerned about world peace and unconcerned about theology is about as sensible as trying to build a skyscraper without the help of the physical sciences. That is why the writers of this *Social Action* series began their writing conferences with a reexamination of basic Christian doctrines. The Christian teaching about sin and the grace of God, for example, are directly related to the problems we have dealt with in this article.

From our study of the Christian sources we gain some discernment of overall Christian directives for our world. Such study plus the experience and thinking in the main stream of Christian history lead us to believe that the four goals analyzed in this article are Christian objectives. For them we claim the sanction of the Gospel. (There are, of course, other historical objectives which Christianity supports.) When, now, we examine specific proposals and situations (inflation, economic systems, "wheat for India," the United Nations, communism, Point IV), we come to them with a standard. Do they, or do they not, tend to forward our accepted Christian objectives? Sometimes the answer appears to be, "No, definitely not." Sometimes it is "Yes, in the main, but with reservations." At other times, a quite important problem may be so morally ambiguous that the decision

must be made with almost no help from Christian principles. But the difficulty of identifying a *Christian* opinion on specific social policies must not deter us from trying to make decisions in the light of our faith.

When there is radical disagreement on fundamental means and goals, we can only say, "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me." To put "good feeling" or harmony ahead of conviction is a sin. (Many a leader, wanting to "get ahead," be popular, protect his security, rationalizes himself into believing that, by avoiding controversy, he is furthering the Christian spirit of "unity.") In dealing with immediate and specific proposals we must try to hold our truth in humility, be ready to listen and to change our minds.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR WORLD UNREST

Our analysis has tried to indicate what may be or should be the response of Christians to the social forces we have discussed. Two questions remain. To what degree are Christianity, Western political ideas, and Western technology responsible for all this unrest and striving? What is the relation of communism to the many-sided revolutionary forces? No one can possibly have enough insight and information to give a complete answer to either of these questions. We must try to avoid the neat explanation, which, because it omits important facts, does not give us a sound basis for action.

The Role of Christians

It seems clear that Christian teaching and the example of many Christian men and women have worked powerfully to create discontent with unjust institutions, even though the practices of many Christians have been radically inconsistent with their faith. There is no necessary contradiction between the Christian faith and the nation-state, nor would a world-embracing political system necessarily be more friendly to Christian objectives; but the essential universalism of the Gospel has ultimately and everywhere worked against the divisiveness and ex-

clusive tendencies of nationalism. In the family of God there are no "foreigners." The Christian conception of the worth of all persons and Christian condemnation of the exploitation of persons has helped to destroy a complacent acceptance of imperialism. No account of the factors in the spreading rejection of "white supremacy" practices is complete without reference to the influence of Christian insistence on the equality of all men before God. The Gospel's central concern for the poor and the weak, its utter rejection of living "sumptuously every day" while Lazarus is in want, its teaching on love and justice are related to revolt of the poor against misery and to the uneasy conscience of the prosperous. Whatever the shortcomings of the church and of individual Christians, the God of the Old Testament prophets and of Jesus Christ has not been without witness in our world. And the witness has been a corrosive acid, eating away the foundations of injustice. This is the permanent and enduring revolution.

Contribution of Western Political Ideas

Western political ideas, having their roots in Christian doctrine, expressed in the "liberty, equality, and fraternity" of the American and French revolutions, have been at work much longer than Marxism. The influence of the English Magna Charta and the American Bill of Rights has not been limited to the countries of their origin or to the Western world. If, at the moment, Western democracy does not enjoy undisputed prestige around the globe, the fact remains that it has been an incalculably powerful liberating force, shaking every kind of oppression and lifting up an ideal which has inspired untold millions.

Why, then, does Marxist communism offer such competition and, for many, displace the truer and more permanent revolutionary forces? The answer seems to be composed of a positive and a negative. On the negative side, the fact to be recognized is that Christianity and Western democracy have failed to "follow through." The carriers of the true revolution have grown tired and complacent. Seduced by material prosperity, Western



leadership devotes most of its energies to the protection of its own privileged position. A dynamic philosophy has been robbed of its dynamism and turned into a dike against the flood waters of change. The prophets of a better future for all mankind have become the priests of the established order. But since the "established order," even in the form of "the American way of life," is far from being a good order for everyone, and since even its benefits are not possessed by most of the world's people, the priests are rejected and many turn to the false prophets of a better day, known as communists.

There are signs of awakening. Writers such as Barbara Ward, to name only one example, are protesting powerfully against the betrayal by the West of its own dynamic and creative ideas.* Christians are beginning to work out the implications of their faith in terms of practical policies in the international, industrial, and racial fields. The fate of China has made more insistent the question, "What has been lacking in our Christian missionary work, that suffering people turn for help to something as false in philosophy and brutal in program as communism?" Western political leadership begins, at its best, to slough off the irresponsible isolationism and the moral complacency which have come close to handing the world over to a disastrous leadership. If we are not yet fully clear about it, we begin to sense our supreme obligation—not merely to uncover the falseness of the communist way, but to release in their full power the principles of Christianity and democracy and to help work out their implications in forms which people on the march can use.

The Communist Appeal

But the positive reason for communism's appeal still exists. People who, if they know nothing else, know that their present lot is intolerable and must give way to something different, are bound to turn an attentive ear to spokesmen of the country which only recently overturned the old and established a new

* See her *Policy for the West*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1951, especially the chapter on "Faith for Freedom."

way of living. The illiterate millions hear that Russia, thirty years ago heavily illiterate, has now almost banished illiteracy. A nation, thirty years ago agriculturally backward, now uses the latest machinery and methods. In one life-span an industrially underdeveloped country has become the world's second industrial power. In areas where land reform is a desperate need, the brutalities accompanying the collectivization of land in Russia do not entirely offset the appeal of the fact that there the hated landlord was dispossessed. Stalinist Russia, moreover, does not labor under the handicap of being associated in the minds of millions of depressed peoples with Western imperialist and "white supremacy" practices. Communism also has the advantage of offering both an integrated interpretation of history and social institutions and a detailed strategy for destroying old orders and inaugurating new forms. Its comprehensive training programs for leaders, its disciplined party, its fanatical faith that history is on its side are further elements in its strength.

To call attention to all this is not to minimize communist military threats and actions, its ruthless political stratagems, and its cynical subversion of humanitarian ideals in the interests of Russian power. These facts, every day more clearly seen around the world, help to rob the communist promise of liberation of its appeal. It remains a truth of which we have not taken adequate account that, up to now, communism's main source of strength has not been either military power or political trickery but the appeal of an idea. And the chief weakness of the West has not been in the lack of armed might but in faith and practical programs.

If we of the West allow the full force of the world's many-sided demand for a new day to take hold of us; if, forsaking timidity and complacency, we lift up a banner of hope; if we press forward rapidly in the translation of our religious faith and our political ideals into practical strategies, we need not doubt the result. To interpret the meaning of these days and to summon men to action is the privilege and responsibility of Christians.

Discussion Guides

Below are four discussion guides or leads, each related to a past issue in the *Social Action* series.

1. *The Christian Faith and Our World*: Read again the pages in the first issue on the directives of "Unity in Diversity" for Christian community. Do you find here principles that you believe Americans should seek to implement in their relations with foreign peoples wishing to work out their programs of economic and social reform with the cooperation of the United States?

2. *The Christian Faith and American Politics*: Compare the platforms of the major parties on foreign policy and particularly on issues of economic and social aid or investment abroad and on civil liberties at home. Which appear to you the more adequate for meeting our responsibilities in the world?

3. *Christian Faith and the American Economy*: Have each member of your discussion group be responsible for securing recent copies of the periodicals of one group organized in America and identified by the public in its publicity with "free enterprise" or "welfare economics" emphases. Have the member report in the discussion the way in which the publications of the group dealt with the revolt of peoples in the world against racial and colonial exploitation and on American economic and social aid to these peoples. If members are not familiar with addresses of these organizations, see the May, 1949, *Social Action* for a list.

4. *The Christian Faith and Public Opinion*: Collect copies of the most influential newspapers in your area, along with that of a national newspaper such as the *New York Times* or the *Christian Science Monitor*, so as to compare the front page attention given by the papers to the various stories on American economic aid abroad and topics related to this *Social Action* issue. Discuss which papers seem to be the most responsible in calling the attention of readers to the basic nature of the world upheaval.

Good Reading

Books

Almond, Gabriel A. *The American People and Foreign Policy*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1950.

A brilliant appraisal of the limitations and strengths of the American character which structure government action in world politics.

Berry, Brewton. *Race Relations—The Interaction of Ethnic and Racial Groups*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1951.

Not limiting himself to the United States or to the contemporaneous, a sociologist "attempts to describe and analyze the phenomena which arise when groups of people who differ racially and culturally come into contact with one another."

Carr, E. H. *Nationalism and After*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1945.

An incisive essay of 76 pages, analyzing the political and economic forces that produced contemporary nationalism and showing its essential incompatibility with both individualism and democracy.

Crossman, Richard. *The God That Failed*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1950; Bantam Books, 1951.

Six autobiographical essays dealing with communism.

Douglas, William O. *Strange Lands and Friendly People*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1951.

An eminent jurist's highly readable account of travel in the Middle East, with emphasis on the social conditions which call for the kind of aid Point IV is giving.

Gallagher, Buell. *Color and Conscience*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1946.

One of the few books discussing race relations from an explicit perspective of the Protestant Christian faith.

Hayes, Carlton J. H. *Essays on Nationalism*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1926.

One of the first critiques of nationalism, it is uneven in value but helpful for its clear tracing of the origins of nationalism and its discussion of nationalism as a "religion."

Hellman, Ellen, and Leah Abrahams. Eds. *Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa*. London: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Prepared for the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Myrdal, Gunnar. *An American Dilemma*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1944.

An authoritative study of Negro-white relations in our country. Focuses on the tension between the American democratic creed and actual white practices.

Ward, Barbara. *Policy for the West*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1951.

A book which gives a comprehensive and understandable picture of the major economic policy decisions confronting the Western world in meeting the communist challenge.

Pamphlets

Point Four Pioneers. Department of State Publication 4279, Washington, D.C.

Point Four, What It Is and How It Operates. Technical Cooperation Administration, Department of State, Washington, D.C.

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"A notable feature of this series on 'Christian Community' is the collaboration of young Christian theologians, economists, political scientists, and others in their preparation. Their primary motivation is desire to find a deeper understanding and implementation of the Christian faith in contemporary life. This purpose together with the urgency of the problems discussed commend the articles to all who, whether inside or outside the churches, show a like concern."

—Paul J. Braisted, President
The Hazen Foundation